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MEDIA RELEASE
For Immediate Release
July 8, 2003

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NEWMARKET MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO FRAUD CHARGES

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE – United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced today that THOMAS N. BYRNES III, 45, of Newmarket, NH, pleaded guilty yesterday in U. S. District Court in Concord to a two-count indictment charging him with making false statements in gaining Social Security benefits and fraudulent use of his son's Social Security number.

Byrnes, who gained an education as a nurse paid for by the Social Security Administration while he was on disability benefits, admitted to concealing the fact that he began working and earning income as a nurse while simultaneously accepting disability benefits, during 1999 and 2000. The case resulted from an extensive investigation by the U. S. Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General. Byrnes was indicted in October, 2002.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated: "This type of fraud must be aggressively searched out and prosecuted if these programs are to properly serve the disabled people for whom benefit money is intended. Also, especially at this time in America's history, any misuse of Social Security numbers is of particularly increased concern and will be receiving close attention by this office". U.S. Attorney Colantuono commended the Social Security Administration's Office of Inspector General for what he termed the "swift and extremely competent" handling of the investigation, which led to yesterday's plea.

Byrnes's sentencing hearing was set by U. S. District Judge Paul Barbadoro for June 30, 2003 at 2:30 PM. Assistant U. S. Attorney Al Rubega is prosecuting this case.